

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

University of Montana Course Syllabi

Open Educational Resources (OER)

---

Fall 9-1-2021

### WRIT 540.R01: Practicum and Mentorship - Teaching College Level Composition

Erin Costello Wecker

*University of Montana, Missoula*, [erin.wecker@umontana.edu](mailto:erin.wecker@umontana.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Wecker, Erin Costello, "WRIT 540.R01: Practicum and Mentorship - Teaching College Level Composition" (2021). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 12246.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/12246>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources (OER) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

## WRIT 540, Practicum and Mentorship in Teaching College Composition, Section 01, Fall, 2021

### Course Information

- Day: Tuesday
- Time: 9:30 a.m.-12:20p.m.

### Contact Information

- Instructor: Dr. Erin Costello Wecker
- Office: LA 220
- Phone (406) 243-4410
- Email: [erin.wecker@umontana.edu](mailto:erin.wecker@umontana.edu)
- Office hours via Zoom on Thursday 12:00p.m.-3:00p.m.

### Course Description

This course has the practical objective of supporting your teaching of first-year writing (WRIT 101). In that vein, it will serve as a forum for discussing what is happening in your classes. It will be a workshop where we, as teachers, “try out” different exercises and activities. But the course will also aim to support your development as a college teacher. It will ask you to look carefully at your own teaching practices, encourage your professional development, serve as an introduction to reflective practice, and encourage you to examine the interanimating (Tobin) relationship between contemporary critical theory, practical writing experience, and the teaching of composition and rhetoric. Though the emphasis is on the central, nuts-and-bolts tasks in the teaching of writing (e.g., designing assignments, responding to student essays; selecting topics and texts for discussion; etc.), this is not simply a prescriptive “how to” course. Instead students are asked to consider pedagogical issues and choices in composition studies from a variety of personal and theoretical perspectives.

The practical discussions will be situated among readings that will help us to explore key issues in the field of composition such as:

- How is writing, and the act of writing, socially and rhetorically situated?
- What does it mean to read and evaluate student writing?
- What roles do gender, race, class, and language play in our teaching?
- What “really happens” when we confer with students?
- What processes are involved in reading complex essays and how might we teach these processes?

- How should we grade and respond to student writing and what do grades really mean?
- What factors need to be considered when you design a first-year writing course and syllabus?

## Course Learning Objectives

WRIT 540 is a 3-credit, graduate-level course designed to support your teaching and professional development as instructors of first-year composition. WRIT 540 will use a *praxis* framework in which theory informs the practice you develop and you should see the practices you adopt—especially in specific contexts—contributing to the knowledge of the field. In this course you will become familiar with the University of Montana’s WRIT curriculum and work with your peers and advisors to create relevant lesson plans to promote your students’ writing. WRIT 540 will also help you develop skills as an effective reader and evaluator of student work.

The course includes both (1) an academic component, which will cover some key issues in composition and rhetoric (particularly, the development of student writers, theories of teaching writing, and undergraduate writing courses) and (2) a mentoring component which will help you to explore issues and questions you will be encountering as an instructor of first-year composition. Think of WRIT 540 as a teaching community where we will work together to develop effective classroom management strategies and provide a support system for navigating individual classroom and student concerns.

Graduate Teaching Assistants will be able to:

- Create lesson plans, activities, and assessment procedures that promote student writing
- Convey information through different learning modes
- Use the assigned textbook and collaborative learning activities effectively
- Design inclusive and culturally responsive assignments
- Support the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse writers
- Develop effective strategies for commenting on student papers, providing feedback, and encouraging revision
- Grade consistently and fairly; justify and explain grades to students
- Articulate and apply WRIT 101 learning objectives
- Demonstrate effective classroom management and resolve student-specific issues independently

## Spring Teaching Colloquium

In the spring semester, we will continue our pedagogical and theoretical inquiry during the Spring Teaching Colloquium (STC). The STC is a mandatory component of WRIT 540. We will meet on the following dates: January 24<sup>th</sup> and April 17<sup>th</sup> from 3:00p.m.-5:00p.m. We will meet in the Poetry Corner on the fifth floor of Mansfield Library.

Your WRIT 540 grade from the fall semester will be carried over/held until the end of the spring semester in connection with your participation in the STC. Your official transcript will show a grade of “N” (in-progress) until final grades are submitted at the conclusion of the spring semester.

## Assignments

### **Collection of (4) WRIT 101 Lesson Plans: 30%**

This assignment asks you to complete (4) lesson plans (one for each of the major assignments). Your collection of lessons plans provides the opportunity to share your teaching ideas and innovations. Collaborating in this way enables educators and practitioners to gain insight into the creative ideas of their peers, while also unifying the curriculum across multiple sections. The final product should demonstrate a polished lesson plan that is ready for the WRIT 101 classroom. This assignment will be included in the WRIT 540 digital archive of teaching resources.

- **For each lesson plan please create a handout that:**

- 1)** offers specific details so other WRIT 101 instructors are able to replicate and adapt the lesson for their own teaching purposes.
- 2)** keeps audience in mind for the handout (you are offering pedagogical strategies to your colleagues; i.e. this is not a handout you would share with students).
- 3)** details the WPA learning outcomes AND which key terms your lesson plan addresses. See the reading "Lunsford How to Meet WPA Outcomes" posted to Moodle under topic #2 for more guidance on the WPA Learning Outcomes.
- 4)** refers specifically to the major assignment that the lesson plan is connected to and offers an approximate amount of time needed to complete the activity.

**There are sample lesson plans posted on Moodle under topic #7, in the folders labeled "Fall PGW 2016" and "Fall PGW 2017".**

### **Conference Record and Reflect [R&R]: 15%**

You will audio-record one of your teacher-student conferences. Please ask permission from your students; they must grant you permission to record the session. There is a permission form on Moodle. Please print this out and have your student sign it before recording the session. You will then transcribe the 15-20 minute conference OR listen to the full recording 2-3 times and take notes. Then, please write a 2-page reflection about your performance in the conference. Did you talk too much? Too little? A full assignment is posted on Moodle.

### **Sample Chapter for GCW: 40%**

For this assignment you will develop a chapter for GCW that you think would extend the current edition, capture a pedagogical intervention that is missing, etc. There is always the possibility to publish your work in GCW so keep that in mind as you envision this assignment. Also, I am a huge fan collaborative writing, which means you are welcome to co-author a chapter for this final assignment. I would ask that your groups are no larger than 2-3 writers unless you have approval from me in advance.

For this assignment you will need to:

- Write a sample chapter for GCW that does not currently exist in the text. Please envision the entire arc of your chapter—in other words, you need to include check in activities, freewriting prompts, how your chapter will contribute to the WRIT 101 curriculum, etc.
- Chapters must be a minimum of 5000 words (not including check in activities, freewriting prompts, etc.)

### **Spring Colloquium: 15%**

We will meet on the following dates: January 21<sup>st</sup> and April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3:00pm-5:00pm.

Location: the Poetry Corner, Mansfield Library OR via Zoom based on Covid-19 precautions). Please plan on being actively involved in both meetings.

### **Attendance Policy**

As WRIT 540 is a required component of your professional participation at UM, you are expected to attend every session. If you cannot attend a session because of illness or other personal reasons, you will need to contact me beforehand. Missed classes, failure to complete all requirements, and/or failure to complete all assignments may result in not earning credit for the course. WRIT 540 depends on your thoughtful and active contributions to class and mentor group meetings (STC).

- 1<sup>st</sup> absence: final grade drops one letter grade (example: A drops to B)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> absence: final grade drops two letter grades (example: A drops to C)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> absence: final grade is an F

Your level of engagement and preparation sends a direct message about how much you respect your work as a teacher and your position as a TA.

Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies to permit other students to add classes. Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course through CyberBear to avoid receiving a failing grade.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. I may excuse brief and occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, religious observance, cultural or ceremonial events, or participation in a University sponsored activity. (University sponsored activities include for example, field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) I will excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service; please provide appropriate documentation (see below).

Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student's customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student's attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.

Students in the National Guard or Reserves are permitted excused absences due to military training. Students must submit their military training schedule to their instructor at the

beginning of the semester. Students must also make arrangements with the instructor to make up course work for absences due to military service.

## Grading

I will be looking for evidence of each student's progress towards professional level work. More specifically I will be looking for evidence of...

- well-supported and original work
- an understanding of rhetoric, composition, and literacy (RCL) theories and practices
- an ability to generate sound teaching materials and justify their pedagogical use
- professional quality work, in terms of mechanics, design, protocol, and execution

All deadlines are firm; any deviation from these deadlines must be negotiated in advance.

## Academic Conduct

You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Students should review the University of Montana Student Conduct Code so that they understand their rights in academic disciplinary situations.

Academic Conduct. Believe it or not, this can be an issue here. What follows is the same language you printed in your WRIT 101 syllabi: You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows:

"plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

## Reasonable Program Modifications

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction for students with disabilities in collaboration with instructors and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE), which is located in Lommasson Center 154. The University does not permit fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.